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NEWTON ABBOT URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH. 1943.

To the Chairman and Members of the Council.

This report, the fifth of the war period, is drawn up in accordance with instructions contained in a Ministry of Health Circular dated 15th February 1944, which directs that it shall be on the same lines as previous wartime reports and confined to essential matters affecting the health of the people and particularly those arising out of the war. On this occasion the Minister also requires a brief statement regarding the sufficiency and the quality of the water supply of the District.

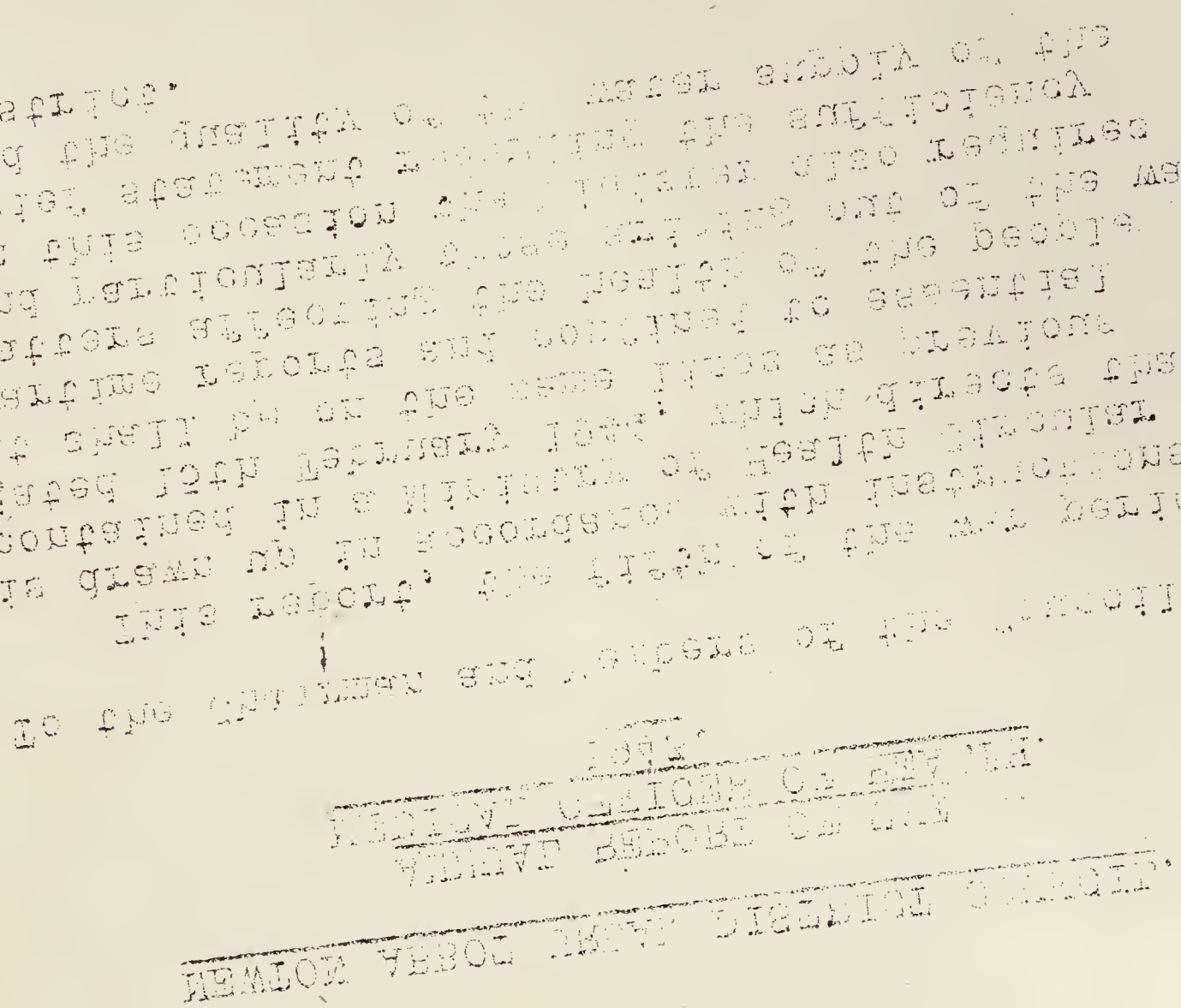
FIGURE NINETEEN. LAKE TOBIA WOMEN
WEARING BEADED CAPACITY
AND TO BEGIN ALTERNATE
LEFT.
FIGURE 20. TO BEGIN, THE NEEDLE AND OF
THREAD, AND TO PRODUCE THE ALTERNATE
BEADED LOOP. THE FIRST ROW IS
COMPLETED IN A MINIMUM OF HALF
STITCHES. THE SECOND ROW IS
DIFFICULT.

INFECTIOUS DISEASE.

If 1942 can be regarded as a good year in respect of the general health of the people and the low incidence of infectious disease as it undoubtedly was then 1943 must be counted as better still. Apart from a fairly extensive outbreak of measles in the early spring and another of influenza in the autumn the amount of epidemic disease as can be seen by the subjoined table was small and calls for no special comment, except to say that the reduction of the Diphtheria cases from 56 in 1941 to 4 last year really looks as though the benefits of immunisation were being reaped. There can be little doubt that this is so and should remove the last trace of hesitation from those parents who have not had their children protected against this dangerous disease.

DISEASE		CASES SENT TO HOSPITAL	DEATHS
Measles	198	0	0
Whooping Cough	18	0	0
Pneumonia	2	0	0
Scarlet Fever	7	7	0
Diphtheria	4	4	0
Erysipelas	3	0	1
Ophthalmia Neonatorum	1	0	0

Of the 4 notified cases of Diphtheria two were newly admitted boys at the Approved School, one was a ward maid at the Isolation Hospital and the fourth a young woman of 22 was a doubtful case and not proved. They all occurred in the first quarter of the year.

DIPHTHERIA IMMUNISATION.

For this purpose sessions were held at the School Clinic once a fortnight throughout the year. The numbers of those who completed the

course were:-

Under 5 years of age - 96
Over 5 years of age - 48. Total 144

It is estimated that 75% of children under 5 and 93% of those over 5 i.e. the school children, are now immune. This is satisfactory especially as regards the younger group as many of the parents still need a lot of persuasion on the part of the County School Nurses to whom I am very grateful for their efforts in this respect.

TUBERCULOSIS.

The number of new cases shows a slight decrease on the figures of a year ago as also do the deaths. This is somewhat remarkable as after living under war conditions for over four years the reverse might have been expected.

	Male	Female	Total
New cases	12	3	15
Deaths	5 4	4 5	9

The figures in the last report a year ago were 18 and 11 respectively.

SICK BAY FOR SCABIES and other Contagious Skin Diseases at 'Loraine' Forde Park.
This wartime institution has put another useful year's work to its credit and more than justified its existence. Indeed it is difficult to see how it could be dispensed with as it appears that other similar institutions have been closed down with the consequence that it draws its patients from an ever widening circle. Though evacuees still turn up occasionally the majority are Devon children born and bred. Some of the cases are in a very bad state on arrival and would be quite inadmissable anywhere else. It reflects great credit on the matron and staff on the way they tackle what is sometimes a very unpleasant job.

Inpatients 112

	Scabies	Impetigo	Mixed Infections
Newton Urban	25	9	2
Newton Rural	43	6	-
Ashburton	9	-	8
Dawlish	6	3	-
Teignmouth	-	1	-
	83	19	10

Outpatients 247

Newton Urban	53	2
Newton Rural	191	1
	244	3

Grand total of patients In and Out 359, of these 108 were evacuees and there were 64 adults.

What keeps the ball rolling in Scabies is the fact that medical aid is often not called in until the whole family is more or less infected sometimes including the father and mother.

EVACUEES.

These are still in our midst though in considerably reduced numbers. Latterly however there has been a slight movement back here again, On the 31st December last there was a total of 446 men, women and children billeted in the District of whom 220 were unaccompanied children. This compares with 700 and 340 respectively on the same day of the year before. The above total also includes 80 adults and 36 children who live in the 25 requisitioned houses.

CLEANSING STATION. for children.

This institution established at the County Welfare Centre but administered by the Urban Council continued its work throughout the year.

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

The decrease in the number of evacuees caused a corresponding drop in the number treated which was 76 compared with 142 of the year before.

HOUSING.

The house shortage continues to be acute and it is hardly necessary to say that none have been built. There are in fact fewer inhabited houses now than in 1939 and of all the post war problems that will have to be dealt with by the Council that of housing the people is certainly the first and the most difficult of solution. The failure to make full use of the Slum Clearance Act 10 years ago will not make the matterany easier, as houses which were bad then but might have been reconditioned at a reasonable cost when building was comparatively cheap are now in a deplorable state and could not be made habitable at any cost. These should be swept away without hesitation and terraces of houses built in their place. It might be objected that they would have no gardens. This is true but there are a great many people who, garden or no garden, would much prefer to be near the shops and their work than to live on a housing estate outside the town.

MILK.

Of the samples taken and tested for cleanliness during the year 38% failed to pass the test. Efforts are being made by the Ministry of Health in conjunction with the Board of Agriculture and the Ministry of Food to improve the quality of milk so that it will keep sweet for at least 24 hours after delivery in warm weather. This depends almost entirely on the amount of care taken by the milkman. If he has clean hands, a clean cow and a clean milk pail, he will produce clean milk. The cowhouse itself is of minor importance.

[illegible]

Safe milk, that is milk free from the germs of disease such as tuberculosis is a different matter. This does not depend on the care taken by the milkman. He does not know his cow is diseased and that its milk is harmful to those who drink it. The only way to be sure of getting germ free milk is to bring it to the boil and then quickly cool it. With pasteurised milk this has already been done and is really the only safe milk for children's use.

WATER SUPPLY is that of the Torquay Corporation Waterworks. The supply is constant and of exellent quality and is supplied directly to between 98 and 99% of the houses. There are no stand pipes. Any plumbo solvent action it may have is effectively dealt with at the Waterworks as no lead is found on analysis.

VITAL STATISTICS.

Population 14690 (a decrease of 710)

Live Births.

Male 97 (Illegitimate 11)
Female 106 (Illegitimate 12) Total 203.

Birth rate - 13.8 per 1000 people.

Average Birth Rate for last 10 years 11.4

England and Wales Birth Rate 16.5

Still Births.

Male 3 (Illegitimate 1) Female 3 Total 6.

Still Birth Rate - 28 per 1000 births live & still

Deaths.

Male 101, Female 124, Total 225.

Death Rate - 15.3 per 1000 people.

England and Wales Death Rate 12.1.

Infant Mortality.(under 1 year).

Male 6 (Illegitimate 2) Female 7, Total 13.

A Rate of 64 per 1000 live births.

England and Wales Rate 49.

Maternal Mortality (Childbirth) - Nil

W.H.SCOTT.

Medical Officer of Health.